

## **VISTA Child Care Benefit Tutorial**

Do you need child care to serve?

### **Who is eligible for the AmeriCorps child care benefit?**

- Are you enrolled in the VISTA program?
- Do you have custody of the children and are they living with you?
- Are the children under the age of 13?
- Will the AmeriCorps child care benefit be the ONLY child care subsidy you will receive?

If you answer “yes” to all four questions, you are eligible for this benefit, providing you meet your state’s income requirement.

If you answered “No” to any of these questions, then you are not eligible for the AmeriCorps child care benefit.

If you have questions about your eligibility, or your own state’s income requirements, contact GAP Solutions, Inc. (GAPSI). GAPSI manages the Corporation for National & Community Service’s (CNCS) child care program including VISTA, and is here to help you through the process.

GAPSI: (855) 866-0687 / <http://www.americorpschildcare.com> / [AmeriCorpsChildCare@gapsi.com](mailto:AmeriCorpsChildCare@gapsi.com)

### **What is the AmeriCorps child care benefit?**

As a VISTA member you can receive up to \$400 per child per month.

Child care benefits are paid directly to qualified child care providers.

Providers may not live in the same household as you and your child.

Child care benefits may not exceed applicable payment rates as established in the state in which the child care is provided.

### **What about state assistance?**

If you are eligible for the AmeriCorps child care benefit, you are probably also eligible for child care assistance from your state.

1. If you are already receiving state child care benefits, you can keep them, but you cannot get the AmeriCorps child care benefit as well.
2. If you are not already receiving assistance from your state, continue for more information about how to apply for the AmeriCorps child care benefit.

## **How do you apply for the AmeriCorps child care benefit?**

The application process isn't easy and it will require work on your part. You'll need to:

- Gather a lot of documents to show that you meet the requirements.
- Work closely with your child care provider so they submit the required documentation.
  - Verify that your provider meets state qualifications necessary to receive the AmeriCorps child care benefit.

## **So what is the application process?**

- Complete the application form
- Work with your child care provider to do the same
- Gather your documentation
  - Use Member Checklist
  - Share Provider Checklist
- Submit your application electronically or via hardcopy
- Allow 5 to 12 business days to process
- Follow-up with GAPSI in one week

## **Carefully complete your application!**

An incomplete application, including missing information from the child care provider, is the number one reason VISTAs are denied access! This can delay receiving childcare support for several months.

There are two ways to apply:

- Download the 5-page PDF application from the GAPSI site (requires your VISTA Supervisor's signature). (<http://www.americorpschildcare.com/>)
- Apply online (<https://www.americorpschildcare.com/Applyonline/MemberApplication.aspx>)

“Have all your paperwork and documentation ready to go and submit it all at once.” - a current VISTA

## **Gather Documentation**

Be certain to provide all of the following documents with your application:

- VISTA Service Letter (visit MyAmeriCorps to download your service letter: <https://my.americorps.gov/mp/login.do> )
- Children’s birth certificates
- Proof of guardianship
- Documentation of wages
- 4 weeks of pay stubs
- Recent 1040 tax return
- Proof of other income (food stamps, child support, etc.)

Download the checklist and other forms from  
<https://www.americorpschildcare.com/Forms.aspx> .

## **Your provider’s documentation**

Work with your child care provider to make sure their documentation is complete, including:

- GAPSI Application form for the provider
- Child care license (if applicable)
- W-9 form
- Billing rates

Either you or your provider can submit this paperwork.

“Work closely with your child care provider and do as much as you can for them. Be completely honest and let them know that this may take several weeks to a couple of months to process.” - a current VISTA

## **Submit Application**

Submit signed and completed copies including all documentation in one of the following ways:

Online: [www.americorpschildcare.com](http://www.americorpschildcare.com)

E-mail: [americorpschildcare@gapsi.com](mailto:americorpschildcare@gapsi.com)

Fax: 1-800-521-5415

Mail:

GAP Solutions, Inc

ATTN: AmeriCorps Child Care Program

12054 North Shore Drive

Reston, VA 20190

### **Follow-up within 1 week**

Contact GAPSI to verify that they received your application and it is complete. Contact information is available on their site and at the end of this module.

### **Remember!**

The number one delay is failure to submit a complete application by the member and/or the child care provider:

- Visit the GAPSI website ([www.americorpschildcare.com](http://www.americorpschildcare.com)) and find the application and checklists.
- Work with your child care provider to make sure their documentation is complete, and includes:
  - Application form
  - Child care License
  - W-9 form
  - Billing rates

If you are approved to receive the child care benefit, you may apply a portion of the subsidy to cover the cost for child care while you are attending Pre-Service Orientation, so get your application in ASAP!

### **Advice from other VISTAs**

Have all paperwork ready to go and document what you do. It's a lot of paperwork but it's worth it!

Have some money saved up before this process so that you can afford the transition - 6 weeks.

Be sure to follow up faxes and calls with emails and document your communications and actions during the application process.

Don't get frustrated. It's a huge privilege to have this benefit. Just deal with the email requests for documentation. It's worth it!

Hang in there, it gets better, the benefit is worth it! Once the ball gets rolling, GAPSI is great, they pay on time. It's a wonderful experience.

### **Need more help?**

Receiving the child care benefit takes a bit of effort, but will be well worth your time. You may need help along the way, and the VISTA Member Support Unit (VMSU) and GAPSI are here to help. Please contact us when you need help and support.

#### **GAP Solutions, INC (GAPSI)**

<http://www.americorpschildcare.com/>  
(855) 886-0687  
[AmeriCorpsChildCare@gapsi.com](mailto:AmeriCorpsChildCare@gapsi.com)

ATTN: AmeriCorps Childcare Benefits Program  
12054 North Shore Drive  
Reston, VA 20190

#### **VISTA Member Support Unit (VMSU)**

<https://questions.nationalservice.gov>  
(800) 942-2677

300 East 8th Street  
Suite G-169  
Austin, TX 78701